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Black Warrior Riverkeeper Sues Donaldson Correctional Facility's Sewage Treatment Plant Operators

Birmingham – Today, Black Warrior Riverkeeper filed citizen suit under the Clean Water Act in U.S. District Court for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit violations at Donaldson Correctional Facility's wastewater treatment plant in west Jefferson County.

The sewage treatment plant discharges to Big Branch, a tributary of Valley Creek upstream of Bankhead Lake on the Black Warrior River. Bankhead Lake is among the most heavily used sections of the river for recreation. Donaldson Correctional Facility has a long history of discharging improperly treated sewage.

Nelson Brooke, staff Riverkeeper for the nonprofit clean water advocacy organization, noted, "We sent the Department of Corrections a notice of our intent to sue in 2004 for improper sewage treatment at Donaldson Correctional Facility, an action which instigated the prison's cleanup after over a decade of sewage pollution. Unfortunately, the prison is again violating its permit to discharge properly treated wastewater, allowing bacteria to flow into Big Branch. We are again taking legal action to hold the state accountable for polluting the river upstream of where countless of people live, swim, recreate, and fish on a regular basis. It's time to get this mess cleaned up."

Eva Dillard, Staff Attorney for Black Warrior Riverkeeper, added, "Operations of our State government, especially the Department of Corrections, should not only follow the law, they should exemplify best practices necessary to conserve and protect the valuable water resources that belong to all of the citizens of Alabama."

To view Nelson Brooke's aerial photo of Donaldson Correctional Facility (top portion of photo), and Big Branch flowing into Valley Creek (lower portion), [click here](#).

To view the lawsuit, [click here](#).

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Black Warrior Riverkeeper is a citizen-based nonprofit organization whose mission is to protect and restore the Black Warrior River and its tributaries. A member of Waterkeeper Alliance, Black Warrior Riverkeeper was the Alabama Environmental Council's 2007 Conservation Organization of the Year and the American Canoe Association's 2008 Green Paddle Award winner. Nelson Brooke, Riverkeeper, won the Alabama Rivers Alliance's 2010 River Hero Award. **Contact:** Nelson Brooke at info@blackwarriorriver.org or 205-458-0095 or Eva Dillard, Staff Attorney, at edillard@blackwarriorriver.org or 205-458-0095.